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TAGS: [KAWC](#) [PREL](#) [AORC](#) [ICJ](#) [USUN](#)

SUBJECT: ICJ - PRESERVATION OF NUREMBURG TRIAL ARCHIVES

1. (U) Summary. The Archives of the Nuremburg International Military Tribunal (NIMT) in the custody of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) are facing two preservation threats. First, the obsolete nature of the equipment on which the proceedings were recorded risks this material becoming inaccessible. More seriously, the paper documents are in danger of further deterioration due to inadequate storage facilities. These assessments were conveyed in a letter from the ICJ to the Assistant Secretary-General of the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations on 10 March 2004. This letter, copied to the Ambassador and representatives of the other four WWII allied powers, requests financing for the costs of the treatment, restoration and scanning of paper documents and of the digitalisation of metal discs from the Archives of the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal. End Summary.

2. (U) The ICJ letter notes that the preservation of the paper documents included in the NIMT archives should be considered a priority. It includes an assessment sent to the ICJ on April 3, 2003, by the national Archives of the Netherlands which estimated the cost of restoring and properly storing the the NIMT paper documents at 168,700 euros. The Dutch assessment concluded that after random sampling of the archives it was apparent that there are two reasons for the poor condition of the paper. First, the quality of the paper is poor and has a tendency to degrade rapidly. Second, the archive is kept in "closed iron safety cases" in "office" conditions that include "direct sunlight and no climate control". As a result, the paper is giving off emissions and making the "safety" boxes, in fact, a very unstable place for the documents to be contained. The Dutch experts assess that 91% of the NICT archive will need proper long-term conservation treatment, including thorough cleaning of the documents and removal to a new, more appropriate, storage facility. The Dutch also propose to digitally scan the documents so that they would be more easily accessible to those who would like to view them.

3. (U) The letter includes a second assessment sent by the Dutch Institute for Images and Sound to the ICJ on 24 February 2004 regarding the digitalization of the information on the 1,942 metal discs. This assessment concludes that although the metal discs which contain what we understand to be the audio recording of the NIMT oral proceedings will "remain in good condition for the next ten years" the "contents will soon be inaccessible" due to the fact that turntables that can be used to play the discs are rare and are considered "obsolete equipment". The assessment advises that the discs be transferred to a digital medium "in order to preserve the contents of these discs for prosperity". The Dutch Institute for Images and Sound estimates it will take approximately five years to complete the project at a cost of Euro 200,000. They have also noted that the Institute will be opening a new building in 2005 which will include air-conditioned warehouses that could store the NIMT archives for a "symbolic price".

4. (U) Embassy requests consideration by the Department of any funding the USG could contribute to this worthwhile project. The ICJ letter and attached assessments have been faxed to L/UNA and S/WCI.

SOBEL